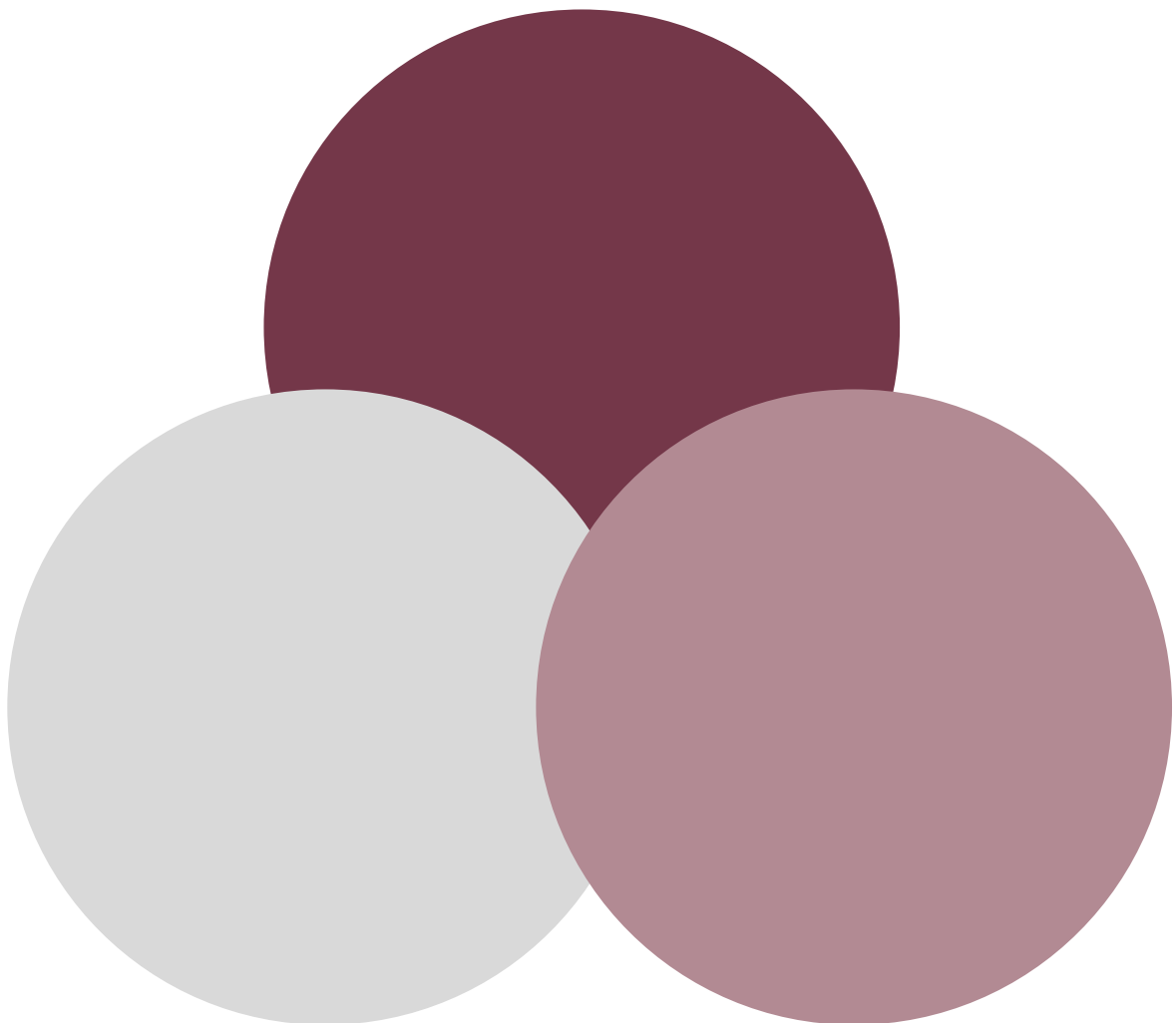




MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
HOUSING AND RESIDENCE LIFE

Living Learning Communities Manual

Designed to assist Residence Education Staff and Advisors interested in supporting a
Living Learning/Theme Communities





MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
HOUSING AND RESIDENCE LIFE

Dear Partner,

Welcome! Thank you for agreeing to serve as an advisor to one of our Living Learning (LLC) and Theme Communities. Your partnership with the Department of Housing and Residence Life only strengthens the work we are performing to create a "Home Away From Home" for our residential students here at Mississippi State.

The Department of Housing and Residence Life has innovated a Residential Curriculum model for our students, with an educational priority that embodies the university and divisional strategic plans by cultivating inclusive residential communities, establishing personal responsibility, and creating foundations that allow residents to lead and serve in a diverse society. We are confident that this partnership can help achieve all afore-mentioned for our students living and partaking in the LLC and Theme Community Experience.

The work you will be pouring into the community, and therefor into our students, is important, and we want to let you know we recognize that. The relationships, mentoring, and academic support that will come from the LLC or Theme Community program will help retain our students and allow us the ability to set them up for graduation.

What follows is intended to give you an overview of the LLC, or Theme Community program. We realize your time and energy are valuable, so we hope that the resources provided throughout not only assist you but help alleviate some extra time and energy from your planning processes. We recognize the great service you provide as a campus partner and, again, we thank you for stepping in to help us create an experience that will positively impact and influence our students.

Sincerely,

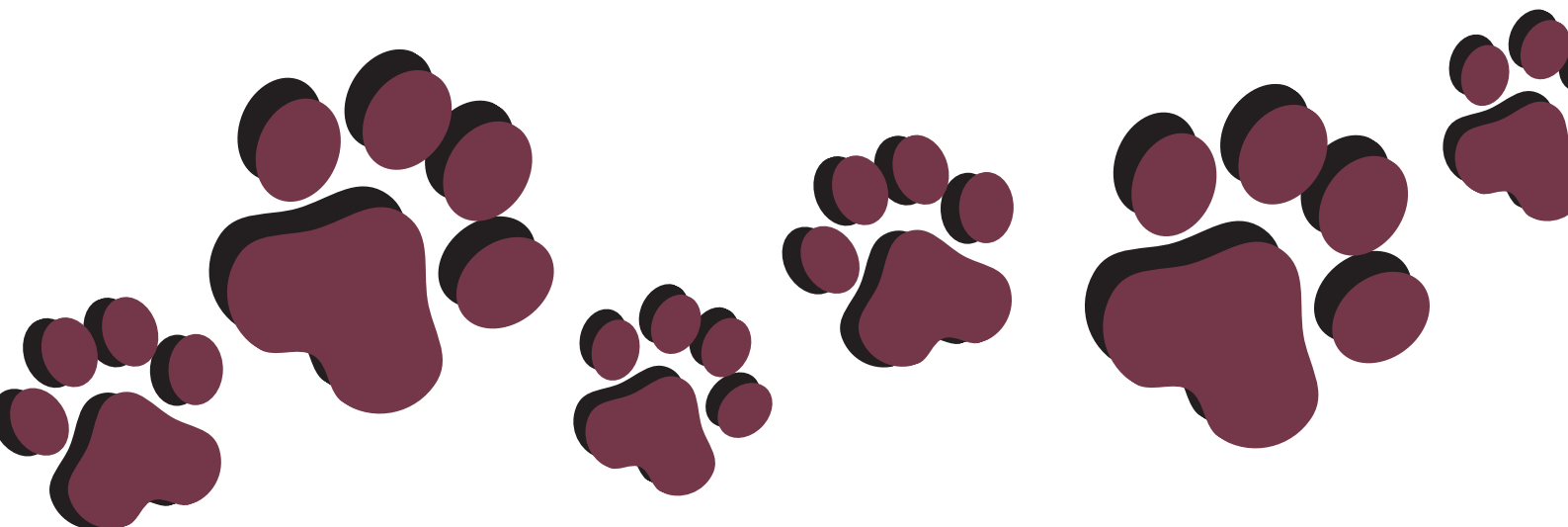
Housing and Residence Life Staff

Hail State!



Table of Contents

04-05	INTRODUCTION
06-07	LLC SUCCESS STRATEGIES
08-09	ADVISING OVERVIEW
10	ADVISING DOS/DON'TS
11	RESIDENCE EDUCATION STAFF ROLES



INTRODUCTION



Program Description

Mississippi State's 16 Residence Halls house and serve approximately 4,800 students, ranging from first-year to upperclassmen. Our residence halls serve as a home-away-from-home for our students and our communities strive to be spaces where our students discover the importance of inclusive residential communities, personal responsibility, and global citizenship.

To fully integrate the residential and academic experience, Residence Education has established Living Learning (LLCs) and Theme Communities. These communities serve a special population of our residential students that live together in the residence hall, who are all engaging and learning both in-and-out of the classroom. These communities are based on a common interest, professional career track, academic-affiliated disciplines, pre-professional programs, interdisciplinary fields, or opportunities to ease the transition to college.

Types of Learning Communities We Offer



Living Learning Communities (LLC): The types are Academic and Special Program:

- Specifically required academic course or requirements
- Faculty/staff that are actively working with the community both inside and outside of the classroom;
- Specific application requirements that help distinguish the students amongst their peers;
- Resident advisors assigned to the floor/wing that provide programs for the students in the LLC that align with the goals of the LLC and the Residential Curriculum;
- Continuous communication with the Department of Housing and Residence Life staff and Faculty advisor that helps strengthen the program and the expectations.

Theme Communities:

- Students share an academic or special interest in common
- Resident Advisors assigned to the floor/wing that provide programs for students that align with the goals of the community and the Residential Curriculum.

All of our Learning Communities share in their mission to enhance student success!

INTRODUCTION



Our Living Learning Communities (LLCs)

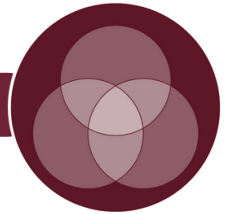
Academic Living Learning Communities

Professional Golf Management (PGM)



College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CAL S)

College of Architecture, Art and Design (CAAD)



College of Forestry (Forestry)

Griffis Living Learning Community (Honors)



Special Program Living Learning Communities



Luckyday

Air Force ROTC (AFROTC)



Promise Scholars



Theme Communities

Honors College Community



Panhellenic Greek Community

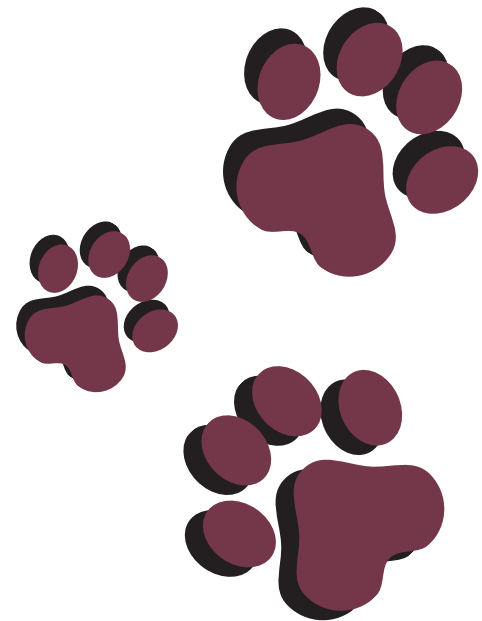




LLC/Theme Community Success Strategies: Residential Curriculum

1. Holistic Development: students involved in the LLC/Theme Community will participate in both in-and-out of classroom experiences that should be designed to enhance their knowledge of their major, career, and self. Students engaged in the LLC/Theme Community should be able to reflect and see growth in their personal and professional selves from their experiences with the community.

- Career Exploration
 - Off-Campus Site Visits
 - Career Exploration workshops
 - Resume Workshops with Career Services
 - Mentor Pairing Programs with Alumni from College
 - Panels with Alumni
- Team Building
 - LLC/Theme Orientation
 - LLC/Theme Socials/Meet-n-greets
 - Intramural Sports Team
 - LLC/Theme t-shirts
 - LLC/Theme Community themed door decs/logos
 - Social activities
 - EOS/EOY Recognition Ceremonies
 - Leadership workshop series
 - True Colors Assessments
 - Clifton Strengths Assessment
- Community Service
 - Large-scale LLC/Theme community service project
 - Monthly volunteering as a LLC/Theme cohort
 - LLC/Theme sponsored service event for community



2. Faculty and Staff Engagement: students involved in LLCs/Themes enjoy support from the Faculty and Staff that are charged with creating the experiences for them. This allows for mentorship to develop, buy-in to the program to be strengthened, and for students to have better access to resources that can help them both during and after their experiences within the LLC/Theme and Mississippi State.

- LLC/Theme Move-In Day
- Faculty Outreach over summer/throughout the semester (email, phone call, etc.)
- Meet and greet
- Dinners and lunches
- Faculty/Staff-lead events and/or panels
- Faculty/Staff guest speakers
- In-Hall Faculty taught courses
- In-Hall Faculty visits
- In-Hall Faculty advising
- Weekly/Bi-Weekly/Monthly check-in meetings with Faculty/Staff





LLC/Theme Success Strategies: Residential Curriculum

3. **Academic Incentives:** students enrolled in a LLC/Theme should have opportunities to be in several of the same class sections as their peers. For example, students in a Honors LLC/Theme should be able to take several honors sections with the same professors together for their first year being in the LLC/Theme.

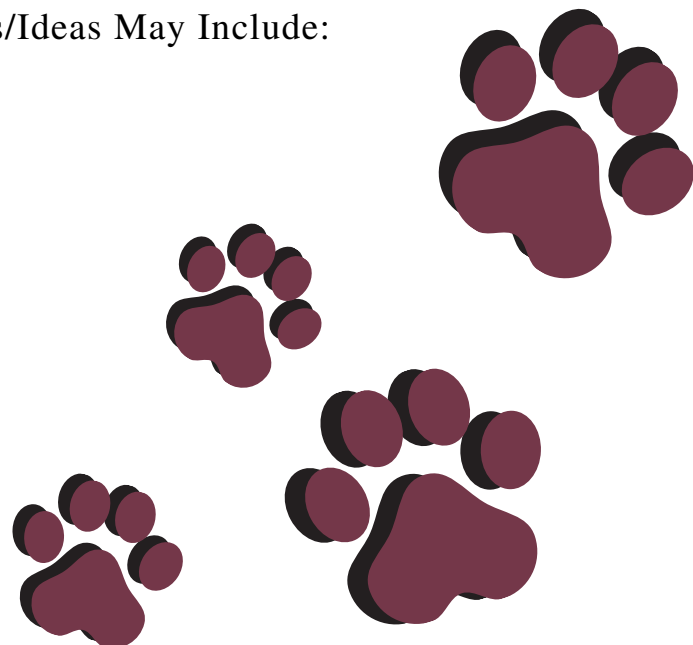
- In-hall academic advising;
- Weekly study groups;
- Final Exam prep sessions;
- Designated spaces solely for LLC/Theme students to utilize to study;
- Study abroad planning;
- Removing holds;
- Priority registration as a result of LLC/Theme membership;
- Held spaces within courses for students enrolled in the LLC/Theme.

4. **Continuation:** students involved in the LLC/Theme should be able to see their involvement with the LLC/Theme continue after their first year. There should be incentive that lasts their time living in the community that can result in mutually benefited opportunities.

- LLC/Theme Ambassador Program
- LLC/Theme RA Opportunity
- LLC/Theme Student Mentor Program
- Socials with former and new students
- Continued career development opportunities for LLC/Theme Students
- Saved spaces on the LLC/Theme floor for returner students
- LLC/Theme Council of Residential Experiences for returner LLC/Theme students
- Advisory Board to Dean
- Paid opportunities

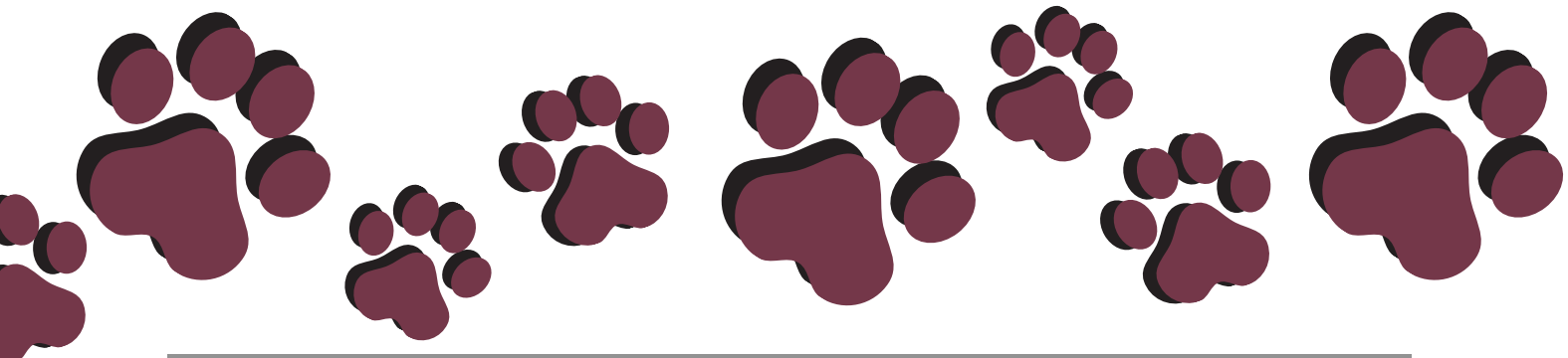
Other Living-Learning/Theme Community Events/Ideas May Include:

- Sporting Events
- Cultural Dinners
- Theatre productions
- Dawg After Dark Events



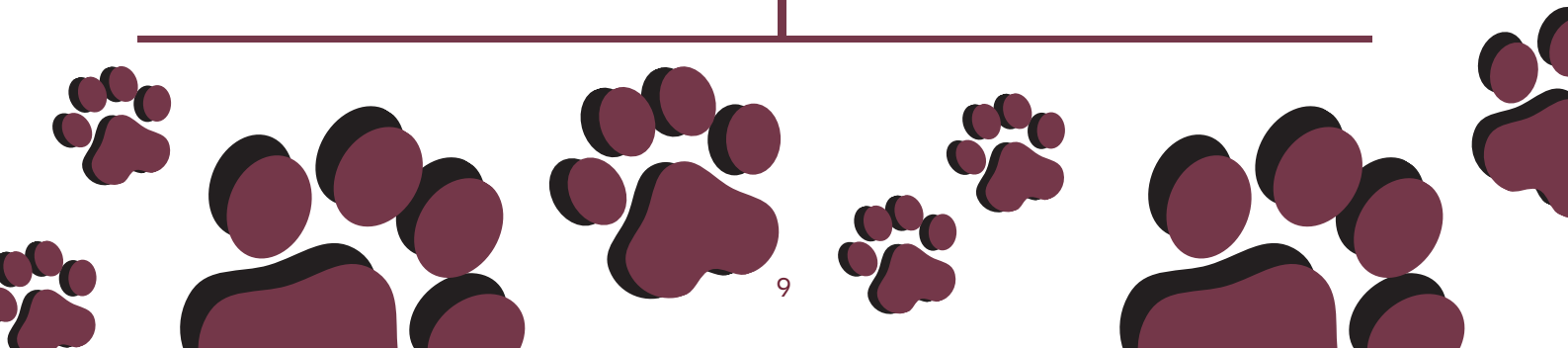
ADVISING OVERVIEW

ROLE	DESCRIPTION
MENTOR	Have a basic understanding of student needs and perspectives, a desire to challenge students intellectually and emotionally while providing support to meet the challenge.
TEAM BUILDER	Take initiative in turning the students from individuals with separate goals and expectations into a team. Enhance the relationships of the students between one another and the advisor to help the group succeed.
CONFLICT MEDIATOR	As conflict arises, it will be necessary to help them navigate those issues with each other. In many cases, It may be necessary to remind them that they both want what is best for the group. Challenge them to think of how their conflict is helping the group achieve its mission.
EDUCATOR	As an educator, it is important for you to model the behavior you wish to see so as to guide the students in reflection of their actions, and being there to answer questions.
MOTIVATOR	You may have to motivate students to excel and to carry out their plans and achieve their goals. Some students are easily discouraged and at the first sign of difficulty may want to quit. You will need to be their cheerleader to keep them excited for the experiences ahead of them.
EVENT PLANNER	As the advisor to an LLC/Theme it is important that you find and make the time to plan events for your students. This will allow you to better engage with them, build your rapport with them, and also retain them. Work with your Residence Life staff liaison to create events for your students.



Responsibilities and Time Commitments

<p>CONNECT WITH LLC/THEME STUDENTS-CLASS, OFFICE HOURS, MENTORING, INFORMAL ADVISING, RESIDENCE HALL VISITS, EVENT ATTENDANCE, INFORMAL ACADEMIC DISCUSSION, E-MAIL CHECK-INS, AND REGULAR COMMUNICATION WITH RESIDENT ADVISOR/GRADUATE RESIDENCE DIRECTOR/COMMUNITY DIRECTOR.</p>	<p>1 HOUR/WEEK</p>
<p>MEET WITH RESIDENT ADVISOR/GRADUATE RESIDENCE DIRECTOR/COMMUNITY DIRECTOR FOR CO-CURRICULAR EVENT UPDATES.</p>	<p>MONTHLY (AT MINIMUM)</p>
<p>IF TEACHING SCHEDULE ALIGNS WITH THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN THE LLC/THEME, ALLOW LLC/THEME STUDENTS TO CO-ENROLL IN YOUR COURSE.</p>	<p>NONE. IF ABLE TO OUTSIDE OF NORMAL DUTIES</p>
<p>NOTIFY DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND RESIDENCE LIFE OF STUDENT ISSUES/TRENDS VIA EMAIL TO COMMUNITY DIRECTOR</p>	<p>AS NECESSARY</p>
<p>MEET WITH AND ASSIST THE RESIDENT ADVISOR/GRADUATE RESIDENCE DIRECTOR/ AND/OR COMMUNITY DIRECTOR TO SET GOALS AND PLAN CO-CURRICULAR EVENTS AND TO ENSURE GOALS ALIGN WITH THE RESIDENTIAL CURRICULUM.</p>	<p>1-2 HOURS IN AUGUST AND JANUARY TO PLAN AT MINIMUM 3 EVENTS: (1) THE FIRST 6 WEEKS, (2) OCTOBER/MARCH, AND (3) NOVEMBER/APRIL</p>
<p>MEET WITH THE ASSISTANT AND ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS FOR SEMESTERLY LLC REVIEW/ASSESSMENT.</p>	<p>ONCE A SEMESTER</p>



ADVISING DO'S & DONT'S



PROVIDE YOUR STUDENTS WITH RESOURCES

HAVE FUN WITH THE MEETINGS!

ALLOW YOUR STUDENTS TO SUCCEED & FAIL- THEY'LL LEARN FROM BOTH!

DEVELOP CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

HAVE PATIENCE WITH YOURSELF AND YOUR STUDENTS. YOU'RE BOTH LEARNING ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER

HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE

SERVE AS A REPRESENTATIVE FOR THEM TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND YOUR OWN

CHALLENGE YOUR STUDENTS TO BE CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE

BE STRATEGIC WITH YOUR APPROACH TO ADVISING

REMEMBER, IF YOU AREN'T HAVING FUN, THEN HOW CAN YOU EXPECT THEM TO.

BE PRESENT FOR YOUR STUDENTS IN-AND-OUT OF THE CLASSROOM



BE THE LEADER OR RUN THE MEETINGS

SAY "I TOLD YOU SO"

IMPOSE YOUR OWN BIASES

CLOSE COMMUNICATION

DO THE WORK FOR THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER MEMBERS

MISS GROUP MEETINGS OR FUNCTIONS

BE AFRAID TO LET THE GROUP TRY NEW IDEAS

ASSUME THE GROUP DOESN'T NEED YOU

EXHIBIT FAVORITISM AMONGS YOUR MEMBERS

DEPRIVE THEM OF OPPORTUNITIES

MICROMANAGE THE GROUP

ALLOW OTHER THINGS FROM OTHER GROUPS/MEETINGS/SITUATIONS AFFECT THE WAY YOU WORK WITH YOUR ADVISEES



Residence Education Staff Roles

Community Director (CD) and Graduate Residence Director (GRD) Role

A Community Director/Graduate Residence Director working with a LLC has the same position expectations and requirements as any CD/GRD position on campus (please see the position description). The difference is in the intentional connections being made between the LLC/course, partnership with LLC advisor and stakeholders, programmatic efforts and resident interactions.

- Meet with the assistant and associate directors for semesterly LLC review/assessment.
- Develop a positive relationship with LLC advisors and stake holders by meeting monthly to set goals and plan co-curricular events to ensure goals align with the residential curriculum and purpose of the LLC.
- Communicate and work collaboratively with the faculty and/or staff working with the LLC to plan and implement programs and events.
- Meet with resident advisor/graduate residence director for co-curricular event updates and implementations.
- Attend all required LLC meetings and trainings.

Resident Advisor (RA) Role

A Resident Advisor (RA) working with a LLC has the same position expectations and requirements as any RA position on campus (please see the RA position description). The difference is in the intentional connections being made between the LLC/course, and social programming and resident interactions.

- Build community among the residents of the LLC.
- Attend all required LLC meetings and trainings.
- Communicate and work collaboratively with the faculty and/or staff working with the LLC to plan and implement programs and events.
- Participate and assist with three special-interest programming related to the specific theme of the LLC each semester along with LLC advisor and stake holders.
- Share feedback with primary stakeholders and campus partners to connect and establish relationships.
- Complete all regularly assigned/expected responsibilities of the resident advisor position as described in the position description/RA agreement.
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Thank You!

We look forward to an exciting semester ahead. We truly believe in you to help us transform our Living-Learning/ Theme Community experience for our students.

